

Donovan Still Expects Release of 2,500 Kin

LAKE PLACID, N. Y., Dec. 29 (AP)—Cuban prisoner negotiator James B. Donovan said today an additional 2,500 relatives of the released Bay of Pigs prisoners were scheduled to come to the United States from Cuba under his agreement with Premier Fidel Castro. Mr. Donovan told a news conference that the relatives would travel to this country on the return voyages of Red Cross ships carrying drugs and other supplies to Cuba in payment of the prisoners' ransom.

The New York City lawyer also said Mr. Castro had raised the possibility that he (Mr. Castro) would visit the United States on a trip that would include a speech to the United Nations and the continuing of negotiations for release of 23 Americans jailed in Cuba on grounds of anti-Castro activities.

Mr. Donovan said Mr. Castro had not indicated when he might visit this country.

But the negotiator said prospects were very favorable for release of the Americans. He said Mr. Castro would give the signal for resumption of negotiations and added that he expected this would come when Mr. Castro was assured that the full ransom would be paid.

The negotiator, vacationing at this upstate resort, said he had no knowledge of any renege by Mr. Castro on the agreement to allow additional relatives of prisoners to leave Cuba. It had been reported that Mr. Castro was balking.

Mr. Donovan said he expected that Mr. Castro would act in good faith and would live up to the bargain.

Nearly 1,000 relatives of prisoners came to the United States aboard the freighter African Pilot. The vessel had carried the first installment of the ransom.

Mr. Donovan said today that Mr. Castro had agreed a total of 3,500 relatives could join the 1,113 prisoners who were released at Christmas time.

Mr. Donovan said the American Red Cross now was chartering a second freighter to take a second shipment of drugs and supplies and return with a second group of relatives.

He said the Red Cross had pledged for the release of prisoners, additional relatives will be brought back, according to the terms of the agreement, Mr. Donovan said.

(In Washington, a Red Cross spokesman said the African Pilot, which took over supplies and brought back the first load of relatives, is no longer available. He said the Red Cross is now chartering another ship, but nothing is in prospect for that for several weeks.

He said the Red Cross knew nothing about bringing back another load of relatives outside of newspaper reports and had not been approached officially. He added, however, that the question is likely to come up at the time the second ship goes to Cuba.

Other officials said the agreement reported by Mr. Donovan was separate from the written agreement to exchange drugs and food for the Cuban prisoners.)

Mr. Donovan said there had been much misunderstanding about the United States Government's role in arranging the prisoners' swap.

He said he did not agree that the presence of the Government in the picture had exerted subtle pressures and had brought forth contributions for the ransom that otherwise would not have been made.

Mr. Donovan said a plan for releasing the prisoners had been completed under strictly private auspices but had collapsed in the crisis over the presence of Soviet rockets, planes and military personnel on the island, 90 miles off the United States mainland.

Mr. Donovan said the decision to resume the prisoner negotiations after the crisis had passed could only have been made by the Government. He said the decision was made at "the very highest level" and the assumed President Kennedy was involved.

Subsequently, Mr. Donovan said, agencies of the Justice and State Departments assisted in settlement of such things as tax and anti-trust matters.

But, he said, the mission "never lost its character as a private undertaking by a private committee. It never became a government business."

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